

CHRISTMAS COUNTERPOINT

By

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No room in the inn for the Savior of men,
A manger will do for a bed;
The Son of God is humbly born,
As prophets of old had said.

*Jingle bells, bargain soles,
And parties by the score;
Get in the race for parking space
At Dillard's department store.*

The mother who never had lain with man
Had accepted God's strange plan.

*A holiday wardrobe one must choose,
And don't forget to buy the booze.*

Apparent shame she bore with joy,
That God's own will she might employ.

*Have fun, be cool, and wear a smile;
Make sure you dress in the latest style.*

Shepherds heard the angels say
That Christ the Lord was born that day.

*Shepherds, angels, why the fuss?
We've got Wal-Mart and Toys R Us.*

In the manger there they saw
The infant Jesus on the straw.

*Cushioned pew and carpeted floor
Are what the modern sheep adore.*

The wise men came from lands afar,
Led to the house by a special star.

*We know where to find the light –
It's Rudolph with his nose so bright*

Precious gifts to him they bring,
Tribute worthy of a king.

*Make the season bright and gay!
You've got ninety days to pay.*

They hurried home by a different route
Warned of God in a dream,
For Herod feared the new born babe
Might spoil his stately scheme.

*Wise men, nice men, who gives a smather?
The important news is by Dan Rather.*

In jealous rage young males he slew,
But Jesus' life was saved.
To Egypt Joseph and family flew
'Til Herod was in his grave.

*Peace and love, to all good will;
What really counts is how you feel.*

Every good and perfect gift comes down
From heaven above,
And Jesus was God's greatest gift
Revealing His great love.

*But look who now gets the applause -
None but good old Santa Claus!*

Jesus, Savior, born to die,
According to the Father's plan,
On a cross 'tween earth and sky,
To pay the debt for sinful man.

*But Christmas is for kids, they say;
Buy everything they dream.
Never mind reality -
Their need is self-esteem.*

Up from death He now has risen
To sit at God's right hand.
With all the power of earth and heav'n
Under Christ the Son's command.

*Public schools across the nation
Gladly join the celebration;
Children have the best intention,
But God and Jesus dare not mention.*

In the midst of this world's strife
Peace can be found still,
If you commit to Christ your life,
And humbly seek the Father's will.

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FACT OR FANTASY

Truth is Stranger than fiction; but in spite of this the world generally takes greater interest in fiction than in fact.

No holiday or celebration is filled with so much myth and imagination as Christmas. Parents go to great pains to keep their children from any clue that Santa is not real. It is indeed strange that they would want their children to believe that this non-existent character has the attributes of God. Not only is he supposed to be omniscient (all-knowing), but also he has the supernatural power to grant wishes. He also must possess the divine attribute of omnipresence, the power to be in all places at the same time.

Christmas fantasies are everywhere. *Snow white and the seven Dwarfs* is one of the films that is dusted off for repeated showings, along with *It's a wonderful Life* and *A Christmas carol*. The latter two involve ghosts, and none of them have anything to do with Jesus. This year they are bringing out the Harry Potter stories, to add witchcraft to the Christmas mix.

Why are such fantasies so popular at Christmas time, when the true story of Jesus presents some of the strangest and most dramatic events ever heard? Once again, here are some of them:

Mary, a devoutly religious girl who had guarded her virginity and who was engaged to be married, was confronted by an angel, with the incredible announcement that she would be made pregnant by the power of God's Holy Spirit. This devastating announcement she accepted without a whimper or complaint.

Her fiancé, Joseph, with no choice but to conclude that she had been unfaithful to him, was willing to break the relationship privately and shield her from public embarrassment. Here was love and drama unsurpassed. But upon instructions from God, Joseph took the pregnant girl to be his wife, although the child she carried was not his.

The birth was announced to shepherds by an angel, accompanied by a heavenly host. Wise men from distant lands were directed to the home by a miraculous star. The birth of

this child was of such importance that the king felt threatened, and plunged the vicinity into terror by the murder of all male children under the age of two. To protect Jesus, Joseph had to flee with his family, like fugitives, to the land of Egypt.

This child turned out to be the Messiah, long expected for many generations. He demanded repentance and obedience to God, and denounced the hypocritical religious leaders, whereupon they had him tortured and crucified. In his death he paid the penalty for sin that we might be forgiven and receive eternal life instead of death.

But that's not all to this awesome story. Three days after his crucifixion God raised him from the dead. A short time later he ascended to heaven and was proclaimed to be Lord and Christ, with all authority in heaven and earth.

If one accepts the story as true, he acknowledges that Jesus is Lord and Savior and ultimately judge. The truth concerning Jesus is demanding, for it is not fiction but reality. It is time for us to stop hiding Jesus in the tinsel, merchandise, and myths of Christmas.

The question is: What will you do with the story of Jesus? Even more important, what will you do with Jesus?

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